March 21, 2016 |

Statements

Statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Vancouver – The following is a statement from Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour, on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination:

“Today marks the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The BC Federation of Labour is committed to ensuring that no workers face discrimination based on the colour of their skin or where they are from.

All workers deserve respect and fairness.

This includes workers who come to British Columbia under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. This program is fraught with systemic problems, and by its very structure allows employers to legally discriminate against workers based on where they are from.

The rights and protections we value as Canadian are not offered to workers under the current Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Instead, workers are tied to one employer for the length of their stay despite the conditions of that work or abuses they may face, often paid less than their original Labour Market Impact Assessment states, and are under constant threat of deportation if they become vocal about poor working conditions.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program has created a second class of workers in this country who are considered disposable. This is unacceptable.

The BC Federation of Labour has stated time and again that if a worker is good enough to come here and work, that worker is good enough to stay here and make a life in BC if they choose.

We echo the call from the Coalition for Migrant Worker Rights Canada for immediate changes to this program so that workers are given permanent resident status upon arrival, workers are not tied to one employer or work permit, and the four-year time limit on workers' ability to stay is removed.

Our province must be built with respect and integrity for all the working people who contribute to our success."